

AB Food & Drink

AVERAGE NFL GAME PER CAP EASILY BETTERED...

Concessions Gross About \$1.1 Mil For Wrestlemania III At Silverdome

By LOUISE ZEPP

The World Wrestling Federation's Wrestlemania III turned over \$1.1 million in concessions March 29 in the Pontiac (Mich.) Silverdome and went on record as the largest indoor stadium event ever held, with 93,173 fans present.

"The event handily exceeded the per capita average of \$5.50-\$6 for National Football League (NFL) events," said Silverdome Director Mike Abington. Tickets sold numbered 88,100, according to Abington.

The card was promoted by Titan Sports, headed by Vince McMahon. Regular tickets sold for

\$30, \$20, \$15 and \$9, and a Golden Circle of 2,500 prime seats sold for \$100 each (AB, March 14).

"It was an outstanding event," said Stewart Davidson, director of stadium operations for Elias Bros., holders of the stadium's concessions contract. "We didn't know if it would be a 'beer crowd' or a 'family crowd,' but it was a good mixture of both."

Davidson said he was "unable to release" per capita spending figures for the event.

Concessions were vended from over 200 locations in the building with over 2,500 concession workers employed during the event.

Soft drinks and hot dogs were the favored consumable items during the 4:00-7:30 p.m. wrestling card.

Over 10,000 gallons of soft drinks were sold. Sizes available included 12-oz. drinks for \$1, 24-oz. cups for \$1.75 and 32-oz. beverages for \$2.25.

No souvenir cups were offered, Davidson said. Coca-Cola, Sprite and Cherry Coke led the list of favorites, with Diet Coke next on the list.

Close to 6,200 gallons of beer were vended, with one size offered, 14 ozs. for \$2. Meister Brau, which sponsored the event, was sold, along with Busch, Black Label, Schlitz and Heileman's Old Style.

The "extra 13,000 people over a sold-out event," Davidson said, helped account for the 50,000 hot dogs (6-to-1-lb.) sold at \$1.50 apiece. Close to 7,000 kielbasa sausage sandwiches were sold for \$1.75 each (7-to-1), and knackwursts (5-to-1) went for \$1.75 apiece.

Around 1,500 packaged ham and cheese sandwiches (4 ozs. meat) were sold for \$2.25 each.

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DURING LUAU — Ron Ganer, center, vice president of the Entertainment Services divisions of Swanson Corp., the company handling the food operation at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester, Minn., stopped to chat with John Huzuka, left, Swanson concessions manager for the building, and Dick Rochelle, right, regional manager for the company. Swanson Corp. put on a luau during the International Assn. of Auditorium Managers' District III meet in Rochester. (AB Photo)

Food & Drink Business Aided By Omaha Civic Aud's Slate

By LOUISE ZEPP

Favorable weather and a stable Omaha economy were factors in record February spending on food and drink at Omaha (Neb.) Civic Auditorium.

Concessions in the building brought in over \$200,000 with a rental income of just under \$100,000, according to Terry Forsberg, building manager.

Last February, comparable figures were \$170,000 on concessions and \$72,000 on rental income, he said.

"Heating costs were down and the weather was good," Forsberg said. "January, February and March are good because of the heavy public tradeshow market."

Leading the list in total net on food and drink was the Omaha Sports Show, with a record day on Feb. 28 netting \$37,844 on food and drink. The show ran from Feb. 24-March 1.

Per capita spending during the event was "right at \$1," which Forsberg said was "good for a sports show." Attendance was 110,000.

The second-best day of spending was posted Feb. 20 when World Wrestling Federation (WWF) wrestling racked up a \$25,572 in total spending on food and drink. Attendance was sold out at 9,800.

Per capita spending for the WWF performance was \$3.25. Forsberg called that day's spending "the second best for wrestling, second only to Hulkamania last February."

Swanson Corp., managed by Lou Sinos, has held the building's concession contract for two years of a five-year agreement which extends to 1989 or '90, Sinos said.

"It's gratifying for all the work we do that we had the chance to do it and we did. It's due to good advertising on the part of the promoter and the building," he added.

Sesame Street's "Big Bird Goes Hollywood" sold out three of four performances Feb. 2-4 and drew 22,592, a total attendance record for Sesame Street performances in the building.

"This is the fourth year for Se-

same Street and the audience has grown each year," Forsberg said.

A food fair held Feb. 6-8 posted a record run for that event with 20,000 attending, and a flower show, held Feb. 11-15, drew 15,000. The All-City Music Festival's attendance for two shows combined attracted 15,600.

Comedian Sam Kinison drew Continued on Page 17



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Service America Promotes Brodsky

Matthew J. Brodsky has been promoted to vice president of sales and marketing for the Recreational Services Division of Service America Corp., Stamford, Conn.

Brodsky started his 11-year career in the food service industry with Ogden Food Service as a financial operations analyst. Prior to joining Service America, he served as Olympic Project Manager for Volume Services in Los Angeles, and, following the Olympic games, their regional sales manager.

Brodsky joined Service America Corp. in 1986 as the national sales director. Contracts acquired or extended during 1986 include convention centers in Houston, Kansas City, Miami Beach, Nashville, and Washington D.C., as well as the Rose Bowl, Indianapolis Zoo and Seattle Center.

GROSS TOPS \$500,000...

Ogden Allied Nets \$4.61 Per Cap At NCAA Tourney

By MELINDA NEWMAN

Indiana University and Ogden Allied were the big winners at the National Collegiate Athletic Assn. (NCAA) basketball championship at the Superdome, New Orleans, March 28 and 30.

Combined food and beverage per cap for the semifinals, March 28 and the finals, March 30, was \$4.61 with the total gross exceeding \$500,000, according to Ogden's on-site Assistant General Manager Buddy Becker. Total attendance for both days was 112,000.

Saturday's semifinals, pitting Indiana against University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and Syracuse University against Providence College, held the sold out paid audience of 57,326 captive for more than five hours, Becker said. "When they came in they were hungry and thirsty," he said. "They made their largest impact the 45 minutes before the game and then during the half hour break between the first and second games."

For the championship game Monday night, the doors opened at 5 p.m., however Ogden didn't benefit from people coming straight from work since most of the attendees came from out of town. "But we were very very pleased with the whole thing," Becker said. "The event was very, very successful. We were just thrilled to be involved with something like this." The last time the NCAA finals were held at the facility was in 1982.

Top sellers were soft drinks according to Becker. Ogden sold 26,000 14-oz. drinks (\$1), 37,000 24-oz. cups (\$1.50) and 40,000 32-oz.

souvenir cups (\$3). To compensate for no beer sales, per NCAA regulations, Ogden converted 35 portable beer stands to soft drink stands serving Coca Cola, Diet Coke and Sprite.

"That's the first thing we did so we'd be able to handle all the additional soda sales," Becker said. "It definitely hurt a lot not to be able to sell beer because alcohol is usually 45 to 47 percent of our food and beverage gross, but it's part of the game plan not to do it here. We're not complaining."

In addition to the 35 soft drink portables, Ogden also operated 22 permanent stands plus 2 large portables on the arena floor. "That's one of the best capabilities of having such a large space," Becker said. "We have a lot of areas off to the side of the arena floor to work with."

Selling surprisingly well were scoop ice cream and Dove Bars. Two portables sold scoop ice cream at \$1.30 per scoop, \$1.70 for a double. Flavors sold were strawberry, chocolate, vanilla, chocolate mousse, French vanilla, and pistachio. Twelve portables offered Dove Bars at \$2.50 per item. Becker said that more than 12,000 portions of ice cream were sold altogether. "I think the increase was because of a lack of beer availability," he said. "If people are having a hot dog and beer, they're still drinking beer after they finish the dog. This way, they were looking for dessert."

Hot dogs also moved well with 17,000 Superdogs sold at \$2.50 each and 20,000 regular eight-to-one dogs sold at \$1.50.

Concessions Gross About \$1.1 Mil...

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Chips and peanuts accounted for 4,000 sales; they were priced at 80 cents and 75 cents respectively. More than 8,000 soft pretzels (2.5 ozs.) were sold at 75 cents each.

AN ICE CREAM SPECIALTY

A novelty ice cream bar, made by Gold Bond of Chicago, was sold for the first time anywhere. Gold Bond's broker in Michigan is Good Humor.

Decorated boxes holding the treats came in six versions, which pictured Hillbilly Jim, Rowdy Roddy Piper, Hulk Hogan, Junk Yard Dog, George (The Animal) Steele and Ricky (The Dragon) Steamboat. The collectible boxes contained a 3.6-oz. chocolate-coated ice cream bar with a vanilla center and a cookie bearing the impression of a wrestler.

"They're called The Superstars of Wrestling Ice Cream Bars," Davidson said. More than 2,000 were sold at \$1.75 each. "They're really good," he added. "It's quite an item."

Four specialty stands were set up for the event and vended 6,000 servings of French fries in 16-oz. cups which sold for \$1.25 each.

A combo of chicken nuggets and French fries sold about 4,000 servings at \$2.75 each. "With a younger crowd, the specialty stands do well," he said.

Over 8,000 servings of pizza were sold, offered in cheese and pep-

peroni. Servings four inches square were sold for \$1.25 each, and Davidson said that was a best-ever showing for the item.

Nachos were sold in the same stands with the pizza. Over 10,000 servings were vended for \$2.25 each (3 oz. each of chips and cheese).

"In food sales, we were comparable to a Detroit Lions game. Beer wasn't, but the novelties made up for it. Some foods did better than the Lions games. The beer wasn't as great because there were more families, but it was a very successful event."

T-shirts topped the merchandise list, with around 25,000 sold. A total of 14 types were available, including the official Wrestlemania event shirt; all were \$12.

Twenty-four items were available for sale, Davidson said.

Over 25,000 programs sold for \$5 each. About 20,000 caps were sold for \$10 each, with Wrestlemania III, Hulkamania and World Wrestling Federation versions offered.

Close to 10,000 posters sold for \$4 each, with the Hulk Hogan poster topping the list. Eight different posters were available.

Pins featuring Rowdy Roddy and Hulk Hogan sold for \$4, with 4,000 takers. Over 10,000 headbands in three versions sold for \$4 each.

Foam hands signifying "number one" were \$8. More than 3,000 were sold.

Food & Drink...

Continued from Page 16

4,753 on Feb. 28 for two shows. The second show was added on Feb. 11 and was 200 short of a sell-out.

Survivor's Feb. 4 performance drew 2,000 and Ratt performed on Feb. 10 in front of 4,900. Creighton University's basketball games were attended by 5,291 on Feb. 5 (Wichita State) and 5,600 on Feb. 12 (Tulsa).

The Omaha District Golden Gloves tournament drew about 4,000 on Feb. 13-14, "a bit disappointing," Forsberg said. "The rest of the per caps were normal, ranging from \$1 to \$1.60 for those with beer."

Beer was sold during the Creighton games, wrestling, the sports show, Golden Gloves and the flower show. Budweiser, Miller and Miller Lite are the brands sold in the building. Beer prices are \$1.50 for a 14-oz. cup and \$2 for a 20-oz. cup.

New menu items in the building include a bagel cheddar bratwurst sandwich, consisting of 2.5 ozs. of Hillshire Farms bratwurst with bagel dough wrapped around it, selling for \$2.

Anheuser-Busch keg wine is also new on the building's list, selling for \$1.50 in a seven-oz. plastic cup and \$2 for a 10-oz. plastic cup.

Auburn Hills Center Moves Food Operation In-House

By LOUISE ZEPP

A search is on for a concessions manager for the \$55 million Auburn Hills (Mich.) Entertainment Center, the future home of the Detroit Pistons now under construction. Its owners decided to handle food and beverage services in-house.

Sports and novelty merchandise, according to a spokesman for Arena Associates Inc., owners of the 20,000-seat arena set to open in July, 1988, will also fall under in-house operation (AB, March 28).

Proposals to handle these services were presented by leading concessionaires, including Volume Services, New Era, ARA, Elias Bros., Sportservice, Ogden Allied, Fine Host and Service America.

Owners William Davidson, Robert Sosnick and David Hermelin, who comprise Arena Associates

Inc., made the decision March 17 to operate in-house so that the food service would reflect their operating philosophy.

"The proposals were entertained and the owners decided to turn them all down," said Thomas Trzos, arena consultant for Arena Associates Inc.

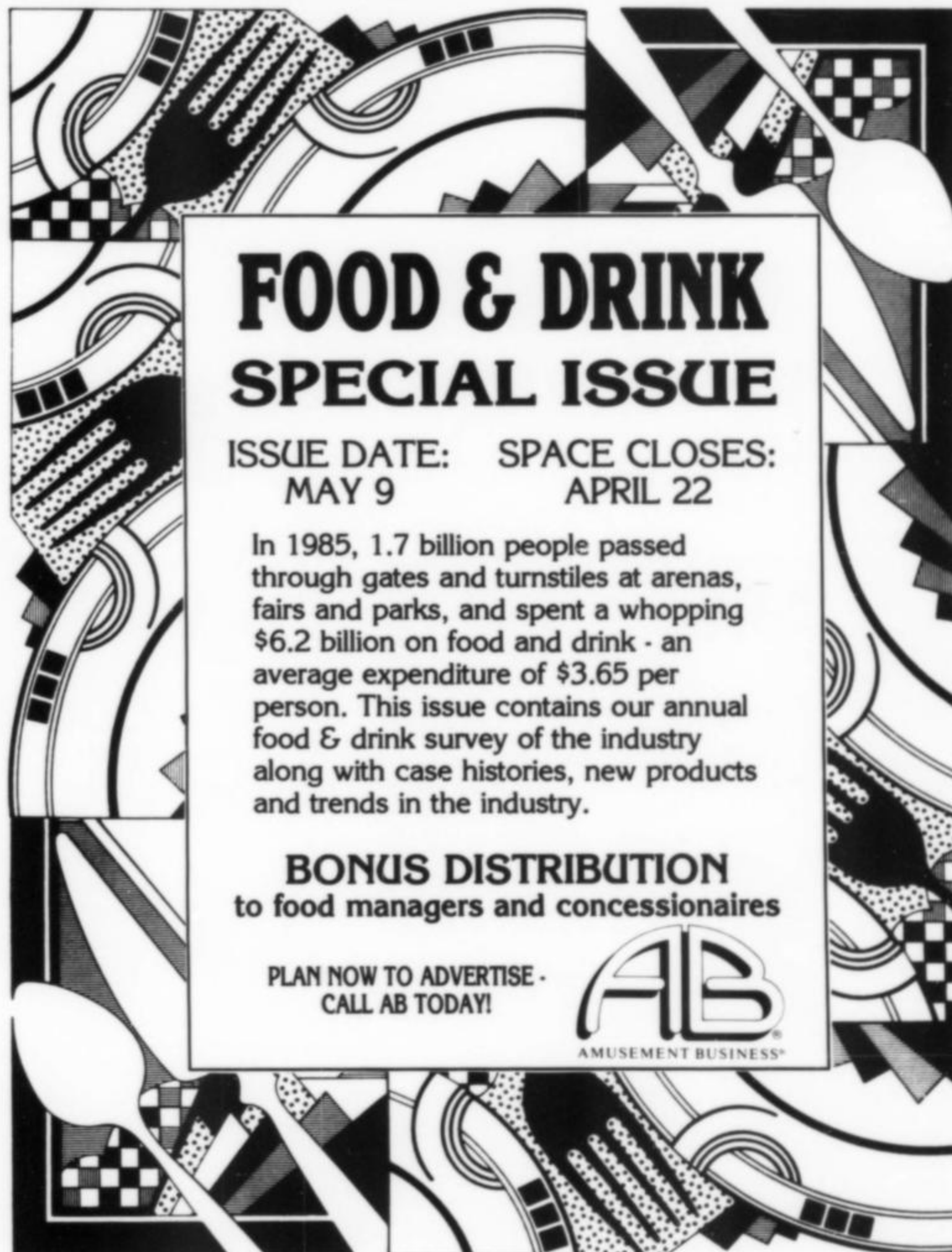
"Now it's a matter of orchestrating the search. My best guess is that I will conduct the search and that Thomas Wilson, executive director of the Detroit Pistons, will do the final interview selection, but nothing is etched in cement," Trzos said.

Food plans area in the arena will include 10 concession stands, two fast food stands, a center court service for waitress pickup and food sales, a 150-seat lounge and a 200-seat restaurant, along with banquet facilities for 300.

Massachusetts Stops Collecting Vending Tax

Massachusetts' practice of collecting a five percent sales tax on snack foods sold from vending machines has been halted, part of a "package" of tax law changes.

The tax was previously incorporated into the price posted on vending machines.



FOOD & DRINK SPECIAL ISSUE

ISSUE DATE: MAY 9 SPACE CLOSES: APRIL 22

In 1985, 1.7 billion people passed through gates and turnstiles at arenas, fairs and parks, and spent a whopping \$6.2 billion on food and drink - an average expenditure of \$3.65 per person. This issue contains our annual food & drink survey of the industry along with case histories, new products and trends in the industry.

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